

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 MCT-01 HA-05 AID-05 CCO-00

FBOE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 SP-02 OC-06

OPR-02 PA-01 USSS-00 PRS-01 CA-01 A-01 SCS-06

OMB-01 SS-15 SY-05 COME-00 EB-08 FAA-00 DOTE-00

SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00 /103 W

-----053105 042129Z /73

O 041524Z DEC 77

FM AMCONSUL HAMILTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2613

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONGEN BELIZE

C O N F I D E N T I A L HAMILTON 539

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CGEN, CASL, PFOR, BD

SUBJECT: CIVIL DISTURBANCES IN BERMUDA

REFS: A) HAMILTON'S 537

B) TELCON RAND/SHUMATE/THYDEN 12/3/77

1. ASSEMBLY OF 200-300 YOUTHS IN THE BACK STREETS OF DOWNTOWN HAMILTON IN MID-AFTERNOON OF DECEMBER 3 WITH SOME MINOR ROCK-THROWING INCIDENTS, CAUSED GOVERNOR TO ADVANCE CURFEW HOUR TO 1730 AND DECISION TO CALL IN BRITISH TROOPS FROM UK TO AUGMENT LOCAL SECURITY FORCE. FIRST CONTINGENT OF APPROXIMATELY 25 ADMIN SUPPORT PERSONNEL ARE DUE TO ARRIVE ON ISLAND FROM BELIZE AT 1400 HOURS TODAY. MAIN FORCE OF APPROXIMATELY 120 TROOPS WILL ARRIVE AT NAVAL AIR STATION TERMINAL IN TWO HERCULES AIRCRAFT AT 1800 HOURS FOLLOWED BY SIX FLIGHTS BEARING EQUIPMENT AND ADDITIONAL FIFTY TROOPS.

2. AFTER INITIAL APPREHENSION CAUSED BY EARLY ASSEMBLAGE OF YOUTHS IN DOWNTOWN AREA, RELATIVE CALM SETTLED OVER ENTIRE ISLAND AND TIGHT CURFEW WAS EFFECTIVE FOR MOST PART.

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TORRENTIAL RAINS WHICH FELL THROUGH MOST OF EVENING HELPED TO KEEP GANGS OFF STREETS. ONLY ONE MAJOR FIRE-BOMB INCIDENT IN BACK-STREET AREA DESTROYED 3-STORY MUSLIM BAKERY (A BLACK ENTERPRISE). A FEW MINOR INCIDENTS WERE REPORTED ELSEWHERE ON THE ISLAND BUT NO SIGNIFICANT DAMAGE DONE.

3. WITH POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF THREE DEATHS IN THE SOUTHAMPTON

PRINCESS HOTEL FIRE THURSDAY EVENING, NO FATALITIES OR INJURIES HAVE RESULTED FROM THE 72-HOUR DISTURBANCES ON ISLAND. THE HOTEL FIRE WHICH CLAIMED THE LIVES OF TWO AMERICAN VISITORS IS BEING TREATED AS AN INCIDENT UNCONNECTED WITH THE DISTURBANCES HERE, BUT A FORMAL INQUIRY MAY RESULT IN DIFFERENT FINDING. AMCIT VICTIMS ARE DOROTHY G. JOYCE AND HER BROTHER GEORGE ELTON GANDY, BOTH OF AMBLER, PENNSYLVANIA. THEY WERE ACCOMPANIED HERE BY MRS. JOYCE'S TWO DAUGHTERS AND SONS-IN-LAW WHO MADE INITIAL ARRANGEMENTS WITH LOCAL UNDERTAKER BEFORE DEPARTING ISLAND ON DECEMBER 2. CONGEN IS IN COMMUNICATIONS WITH DAUGHTER MRS. BLAINE STOCK, 1321 HORSHAM ROAD, AMBLER, PA. AND ASSISTING THEM IN HAVING REMAINS RETURNED TO US.

4. WITH ARRIVAL OF BRITISH TROOPS TODAY, LOCAL OFFICIALS EXPECT THAT THERE WILL BE DIMINISHING ACTIVITY BY THE 150 DIE-HARDS WHO HAVE BEEN CORE OF UNREST HERE. CURFEW WILL LIKELY BE MAINTAINED AT LEAST THROUGH EVENING OF DEC. 5-6 BUT OTHERWISE DAYTIME COMMERCIAL AND PLEASURE ACTIVITIES ARE EXPECTED TO RETURN TO NORMAL. THE ESTIMATED FIVE TO SIX THOUSAND TOURISTS ON ISLAND HAVE REACTED ADMIRABLY. THEY ARE ALL OBSERVING CURFEWS IN THEIR HOTELS AND GUEST HOUSES WHICH HAVE PROVIDED EXTRA INDOOR ENTERTAINMENT. SURPRISINGLY, MOST OF YESTERDAY'S SCHEDULED FLIGHTS TO US LEFT WITH HALF-CAPACITY LOADS. CONGEN HAS BEEN COORDINATING WITH REGIONAL MANAGERS OF THE THREE US CARRIERS WHO HAVE AGREED TO KEEP CONFIDENTIAL

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RESERVATION AND TICKET OFFICES FULLY STAFFED TODAY TO HANDLE ANY REQUESTS FOR EARLY DEPARTURES. I HAVE BEEN ASSURED THAT SUFFICIENT EQUIPMENT WOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE TO HANDLE ANY VOLUME OF PERSONS WISHING TO DEPART THE ISLAND.

SUMMARY: ALTHOUGH CONSENSUS HERE IS THAT WORST IS OVER, OFFICIALS ARE CORRECTLY KEEPING A WATCHFUL EYE ON SITUATION WHICH, BECAUSE OF THE UNPREDICTIBILITY OF THIS SMALL GANG OF MARAUDERS, COULD ERUPT IN ADDITIONAL INCIDENTS AT ANY TIME. I HAVE BEEN VERY IMPRESSED WITH THE CONCERN OF BERMUDA GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TOWARDS THE WELL-BEING AND SAFETY OF US CITIZENS. THE PREMIER AND DEPUTY PREMIER CAME TO THE RESIDENCE IMMEDIATELY AFTER THEIR MEETING WITH LOCAL SECURITY COUNSEL AND FULLY BRIEFED ME ON CURRENT SITUATION AND TACTICAL PLANS. ALTHOUGH HEAVILY OVERTAXED BY MANPOWER SHORTAGE, THEY ACCEDED TO MY REQUEST THAT SMALL UNITS OF REGIMENT FORCES BE POSTED AT MAJOR HOTELS, WHICH ALLEVIATED APPRIHENSIONS OF HOTEL MANAGERS AND GUESTS. IN VIEW OF THE APPARENT REDUCTION IN LEVEL OF VIOLENCE, THE IMMINENT ARRIVAL OF BRITISH FORCES, AND THE DEMONSTRATED CONCERN FOR SAFETY OF AMCIT VISITORS BY LOCAL OFFICIALS, I DO NOT CONSIDER THAT HOLIDAY SEEKERS WHO HAVE PLANNED VISITS TO ISLAND NEED CANCEL

THEIR PLANS, BUT SHOULD BE MADE AWARE OF THE LOCAL SITUATION
AND THE CURFEW HOURS THAT HAVE BEEN IMPOSED.
RAND

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